

## UNIVERSITY of LOUISVILLE

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September 1, 2006

The Honorable Tom Coburn, M.D.  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on  
Federal Financial Management, Government  
Information, and International Security  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510-3804

VIA FAX: 202-228-3796

Dear Chairman Coburn:

This is in response to your letter of July 27, 2006, regarding congressionally directed appropriations received by the University of Louisville (U of L) since 2000. I am pleased to provide the following comments and information.

In order to fully appreciate the role played by congressionally directed appropriations at U of L, some background will be helpful. In 1997, the Kentucky General Assembly enacted a sweeping reform of the state's postsecondary education system. One key directive of the legislation was for the state's major universities to grow their research programs to a point where they would be regionally and nationally recognized. In 1998, U of L responded with the creation of the Challenge for Excellence, a ten year plan that will raise our university to the stature of a nationally pre-eminent metropolitan research institution. It is my pleasure to report that we are ahead of schedule. (Please see the President's page at our website [www.louisville.edu](http://www.louisville.edu) for more detailed information.)

A major tool for enhancing our research efforts was the creation by the state of the Research Challenge Trust Fund. The Trust uses state funds to match other funds raised by U of L to support research in strategically defined areas. This funding has enabled the university to recruit and retain some of the nation's finest researchers and scholars. We also retain Washington representation to help us liaison with the various groups (both government and non-government) with whom the university works.

The U of L policy is to seek congressionally designated appropriations for a limited period of time – usually two to three years – in order to build and enhance selected research disciplines and to provide important services. Projects seeking designated appropriations are chosen through a lengthy vetting process with input from a number of sources. The final list of selected projects must be approved by U of L's Leadership Team and me.

To date, approximately \$139 million has been designated by Congress for U of L, a significant amount of which has been for infrastructure development (e.g., facilities and equipment) to accommodate our rapid research growth. Most importantly, this also has allowed the university to elevate itself onto a more level playing field with other schools so that we could become viable in securing competitively awarded, peer reviewed Federal grants. As a result, Federal funding for research from competitive grants has increased more than 200% over the same time period.

For example, in 2001-2002 we received \$1,200,000 in appropriations for the University of Louisville Birth Defects Center. The funding was spent to redesign and equip some existing space in the School of Dentistry to use to house researchers in this high priority area. The core faculty in that program is currently bringing in an average of \$5 million per year from competitive research funding.

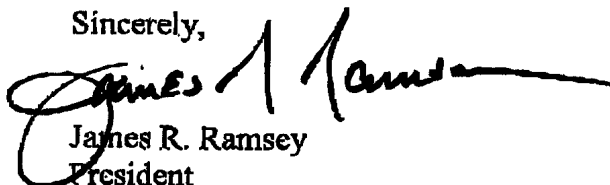
In FY2003 and 2004, the University of Louisville received \$8.7 million to complete the funding for a \$47 million research building on the main campus that will house the research faculty working on multidisciplinary efforts. In April, the 117,000-square-foot facility opened, with more than 40 scientists from the College of Arts and Sciences, Speed School of Engineering and Health Sciences Center collaborating on projects.

Other funding has been used to jumpstart the Sleep Medicine program, the Nanoscience and BioMEMs initiatives, and a soon to open Center for Computer Forensics which will be the only university affiliated research and training facility in the FBI's network.

All projects, research, and services, regardless of their funding source, are carefully monitored by the university. However, the wide ranging disciplines involved and the individual structure of each effort do not allow for one simple measure of success. Each effort is evaluated in an appropriate context relative to its objectives, and I believe the objectives are met successfully.

I trust this has provided you with some insight and a better understanding of the University of Louisville's management of congressionally appropriated funds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James R. Ramsey", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James R. Ramsey  
President